



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4

345 COURTLAND STREET, N.E.
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30365

August 16, 1995

4WD-FFB

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Mr. Gary McSmith
Atlantic Division
Naval Facilities Engineering Command
Code 1823
1510 Gilbert Street
Norfolk, Virginia 23511-6287

SUBJ: Community Relations Plan

Dear Mr. McSmith:

The Environmental Protection Agency has completed its review of the "Community Relations Plan for Marine Corp Air Station Cherry Point".

This plan does not identify the community profile for the Air Station or the surrounding communities. The intent of the profile section is to give a brief history and demographics of the area (i.e. rural, urban, population...). It also identifies key local issues and interest (i.e. aging population, young families, etc...). The plan should also identify the transient population as well as the long term residents of the community. Enclosed is copy of a community profile section to use as a guide.

If there are any questions or comments, please call me at (404) 347-3016 or voice mail (404) 347-3555, x-6459.

Sincerely,

Gena D. Townsend
Senior Project Manager

Enclosure

cc: Linda Raynor, NCDEHNR
Renee Henderson, MCAS Cherry Point
Matt Cochran, Halliburton NUS

The *Preliminary Investigation Report/Lewis Iron Works Site* prepared by contractors to Eastern Manufacturing Co. also provided valuable information.²

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 1 Office has lead responsibility for managing this RI/FS. The EPA Region 1 Office of Public Affairs will oversee all community relations activities at the site. The Office of Community Involvement in the Ground Water Quality Division at DEP will play a major role in implementing community relations activities.

B. CAPSULE SITE DESCRIPTION

The Sludge Pond site is located on a 40-acre tract of land in Litchfield County, Connecticut, one mile south of Woodbury Township on Route 6. (Exhibits 1 and 2 illustrate the location of the site within the State and surrounding geographical landmarks.) To the north is Tanner Lake, used for fishing and swimming. The closest residences are approximately one-quarter mile to the northwest and west across Route 6.

From 1886 to 1945, the site was used by Lewis Iron Works, a major producer of charcoal, pig iron, and organic chemicals. Liquid tar residues from chemical processing were discharged into a two-acre depression on site, giving the area its current name of "Sludge Pond." Lewis Iron Works shut down its chemical operations in early 1944 and ceased operations entirely in 1945. Among the current owners of the site property are Eastern Manufacturing Co., whose nearby plant produces automotive parts; the Wilson Lumber Co.; and the township of Woodbury, which operated an eight-acre municipal landfill adjacent to Sludge Pond from 1961 to 1969.

In the late 1940s, shortly after the closing of the Iron Works, residents as far away as three miles from the site reported that their well water had "a chemical taste and a bad odor." Samples taken by the Connecticut Geological Study in 1949 indicated that phenol had contaminated eight private wells to the west and northwest of Sludge Pond. In the 1960s, the surface sludges on site caught fire and burned out of control for several weeks.

Limited water sampling conducted since 1980 has confirmed the 1949 findings of phenol in the groundwater. In addition, DEP found evidence of heavy metals in Sludge Pond in 1980. Heavy metals, however, were not confirmed by monitoring samples taken by EPA's Field Investigation Team in 1982 or by on-site testing conducted by Eastern Manufacturing in 1983. After private wells were tested by DEP and the District Health Department in 1980, residents were told that their water was drinkable.

Sludge Pond was proposed for the National Priorities List (NPL) in December, 1982. The site has recently been designated a Fund-lead site for the RI/FS, although enforcement proceedings are underway against Eastern Manufacturing.

C. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

★ (1) Community Profile

The Township of Woodbury, named for the abundance of trees in the area, developed in the 1820s as settlers journeyed to western Connecticut in search of farmland. However, because of the town's fairly remote location,

² This and other technical reports (such as the RI/FS workplan) will be made available at the information repository to be established in Woodbury. These reports will give full details of the type and extent of the problems at Sludge Pond.

industry did not begin to develop in the area until about a half-century later. In 1882, George Lewis, an area entrepreneur, erected a blast furnace to manufacture charcoals, and the Lewis Iron Works soon became the area's largest employer.

Several Woodbury residents interviewed for this plan recalled the days when their relatives or neighbors worked at the Iron Works, and old photographs of the company's vast lumber stocks and furnace can still be seen in the local library and on the walls of the town office building.

Since the closing of the Iron Works, major sources of employment in the area have included light industry and farming. Local craft industries dating from the early nineteenth century continue to flourish in the area, as do antique stores and clock shops. Dairy and poultry farms occupy a significant portion of the land in Litchfield County and nearby Hartford county.

In general, Woodbury Township remains a quiet, rural area, somewhat insulated from the industrial development to the south and east. Judging from individuals interviewed for this plan, many town members have been long-time residents in the area, and the township's small population (7,000 reported in the 1980 Census) has meant that local officials know, and are known by, most of the area's residents. A significant number of senior citizens live in the community. Aging issues and facilities for the elderly have been prominent concerns in the community, and according to the township clerk, a central meeting place in the area is the Litchfield County Senior Center.

(2) Chronology of Community Involvement

Local officials have described community reactions to the proximity of an NPL site as "quiet," particularly in the past year. The District Health Department receives only infrequent inquiries about the safety of private well water which according to users, is a brownish-orange color and stains bathroom fixtures and laundry. The last call was received at the beginning of the summer of 1985 from a prospective home builder who was concerned about the condition of the groundwater directly south of Sludge Pond. Because groundwater flows west from the site, and in the opinion of some local officials, is confined to a narrow finger of an aquifer, the Health Department assured the caller that his property was not threatened by contamination from the site.

The level of community concern, while never high, reached a peak in the early 1980s, when DEP analyzed sludges from Sludge Pond and water from a number of private wells. Early in 1980, a local farmer with contaminated well water wrote to the District Health Department after reading an article in the *Waterbury Republican* about the suspected hazards at the site. She was concerned because guests could not drink her water, though she herself was accustomed to its distinctive taste. When interviewed, this same resident stated that she and her husband knew about the problems with their well when they purchased their house and farm and, in fact, were able to buy the property at a reduced price because of the discolored water.

Also in 1980, the Township of Woodbury took over and began rebuilding a town water system from an independent water company. A major part of this project, which was financed through loans and grants from the Farmers' Home Administration, was the replacement of leaking wooden main pipes. Some community members also attempted to obtain a Health Department grant to have the water mains extended to the residents with private wells who had bad well water. According to a County Commissioner, obtaining funds from the Health Department for this extension required demonstrating that the water was not fit for drinking. Because this was never done, the Township was unable to finance an extended water system. While affected citizens conceivably could put in their own pipes to connect to the town water system, this option appears to be well beyond the means of individual residents.

Shortly after the site was listed on the NPL in December, 1982, the *Litchfield County Herald* ran an article